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Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

The breeze is just beginning to be felt; soon it will grow stronger, and then the gale will come which will sweep before it much that man has thought to be built for the ages. But after the storm man will build better things—things that will endure. But mark you this: the final change will come not from hate, revenge, and such motives; it will come as the result of a great and growing love—a feeling that will convince men that they are kin, that the hurt of one is the hurt of all, that the joy of one is the joy of all, that all are one.

— Ramacharaka

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OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

IN MEMORIAM--A GOOD MAN DIES

A. E. JOHNSON *(1890-1960)*

As this issue came off the press, news reached us from England of the death on September 28 of A.E. Johnson, a Vice President of Fellowship in Prayer since 1951. This saddening news was alleviated by the knowledge that Professor Johnson had been seriously ill for a year in Spain and England, and that his death may have spared him a long period of great suffering. There is also consolation in the fact that he died in England, his native land, which he continued to cherish during his years in Syracuse, New York. Nevertheless, a good man has left us, a man of sensitivity, character and spiritual comprehension, and we are the poorer for it. We offer our deepest sympathy to Catherine Johnson, his widow.

Readers will recall his many inspirational poems which FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER printed over the years; and so it is fitting that we say good-bye now to A.E. Johnson, friend and colleague, by printing again the last two stanzas of perhaps the finest of his poems, *THE TRUST*, which originally appeared in the JUNE 1959 issue.

...When in the night I toss and turn,
And fears seem mammoth, help far-off,
And comfortless I only yearn
Childlike, to be consoled by love;
Even so, great Spirit, in that hour
Cradle my heart in thy sure power.

And when my days on earth are told,
When I am weak as any child,
When light is failing, limbs a-cold,
And mind, may be, obscure or wild,
Let me retain one vision: Thee.
Almighty Love, take over me.

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Volume XI October, 1960 Number 5

DRINKING THE POISON OF THE WORLD

In the beginning the Earth was a garden of beauty. The animals were tame and shyly roamed the land. Rippling streams meandered here and there, flanked by flowers, shrubs, and trees. A soft sun glinted through the foilage.

In this bright atmosphere, the gods placed man.

With him came discord. Not long after his coming, the garden was in disarray. He had trodden on the flowers, hewn down the trees, and killed the animals. The sons of men began to quarrel among themselves and bathed the soil in blood.

As a result the rivers became poisoned, and man faced extinction.

In the face of this grave peril, the thoughtful few began to pray.

Shiva, the god who separates essence from substance, had compassion. Descending from the Halls of Light, he came to Earth.

He bade the people churn the waters mightily so that the poison would come to the surface. Then he drank the lethal liquid. From place to place he went, imbibing the poison. His body writhed with pain, and a fever wracked his frame.

At length the contaminated rivers were freed from their venom. Shiva's throat turned blue from the terrible strain, but he succeeded in his task.

Down the centuries his followers have done the same— quaffed the poison generated by the sons of men so that the human race might not be overwhelmed and perish.

— From THE GOLDEN HOARD
By Francis Merchant

EDITORIAL

WANTED: MEN OF PRAYER

The road to God, to Truth, and the perfection of our lives is long and difficult, so much so that one is hard put to answer the proponents of the reincarnation theory. They tell us that in one life we can go only a little way toward divine illumination, that many such lives, hundreds perhaps, are necessary to complete the process. It is a powerful argument, as a moment's reflection will prove. We do not know for sure, we can only speculate. But the thought is humbling and reinforces the feeling that spiritual life is not for everyone, and even for those to whom it has dawned in all its glory and wonder it is a delicate and never-ending journey. At the heart of it is prayer. Without prayer we make no progress whatever.

Life's mystery can only be unveiled through the power of prayer and meditation made over a long period. Books and lectures give us only an intellectual stimulation; they do not strike the deeper areas of our minds where the groundwork of our character lies, and the root of egoism that afflicts us all. Without prayer—made in longing and surrender—this evil root cannot be touched, much less removed. Without prayer and its mighty brother, meditation, we live at the mercy of our minds, our desires, our opinions of the moment. Only the man of God is free from these things. He has gained his freedom by a life of prayer and by total self-surrender to the living God.

The final object of prayer may be said to purify and concentrate our minds and gain direct knowledge of God through transforming spiritual experience. When a man has won through to this, the great prize of human birth, we know it by various signs, but two that are always present are humility and love for humanity. This human love without limit and without thought of self is a manifestation of the love of God. Where humility is not present, where any signs of ego assert themselves, we may know that that man cannot lead others, cannot tell others what religion is or how to attain God. We know at once that his prayer life is lacking, that he has not yet surrendered to his higher Self, that he is

still resisting the grace of God.

When a religious leader speaks out on political issues and takes sides in passing controversies, we may assume that he has gone only a little way in the spiritual life and thereafter we should not listen to him. If we do listen to him, we do so at our own risk; for, though he cannot take us to God, he may well lead us astray.

In a book published early in World War II America's leading theologian stated that the Sermon on the Mount was no longer applicable to modern man, that it was only suitable to the medieval period when its teachings could be carried out in monasteries. Think of it—the heart of Christ's message was not appropriate in the modern age, and the authority for this opinion the outstanding spokesman of Christian theology! Shortly afterward this same man, and his counterpart in Germany at that time, also a world-famous figure in theology, called for victory over the armies of each other's country, each claiming his own country had truth on its side. Just imagine. And yet both these men are still admired today, both exert a commanding influence in religious circles. How short-sighted can we be?

This kind of thing, in one form or another, is happening all the time and we ourselves, not our religious leaders, are to blame. It is because we have compromised the highest religious ideal in our own lives, and in what we expect of our religious spokesmen, that they feel free to act in this manner. They merely reflect the climate of our own thought. It is our forgetfulness of our true natures that gives them courage to abandon the teachings of the founder of Christianity.

The shame is ours that we do not raise to public eminence men of God to speak for us. The man of God is the man of prayer and it is he who remembers that every human being—Germans, Russians, Americans, and everyone—is divine. The rest of us may forget this but he does not. Continually he reminds us of what we so easily forget.

This religious opportunism is a never-ending curse against which we must be constantly alert. Recently we have had more examples of it. Some of our most noted clergymen have taken

sides in the national elections and have fanned the flames of religious prejudice all over the country. How can we continue to follow such leaders when they step out of their role as spiritual guides and meddle in areas best left to others? Their work of spiritual leadership is challenging enough without taking upon themselves the responsibilities that belong to other men. Whether their statements are true or not--and they will only be true to some, false to others--is not the point. If prayer is their vocation, let them pray only that the will of God be done. If religion is their field, let them keep to religion. It is the highest of all callings and is only degraded when it is dragged into the market-place.

If these men are seen to have such weaknesses, who will lead us? Can we continue to follow them when we find that the prejudices, passions and weaknesses that beset all of us have taken possession of them also? Henceforth when we hear them talking of the love of God and love of man, will we not remember that they are only talking, that they do not practice what they preach?

What makes these men, in times of national stress and confusion, act this way? What makes any of us act this way, yielding to emotion and personal desire just when we should be calm and strong? It is because our prayers are not intense enough, they have not yet transformed our lives, and the Christ consciousness is still far from our daily experience; because we have not, through meditation, concentrated our minds and brought them under our control, so that in times of challenge they will obey us, and not their own impulses. If we have really done this, we will always remember the divinity that is the essence of everyone, our reactions will always be under our control, and an unshakable love for humanity will automatically guide us under all circumstances.

This is the answer--prayer, and its great ally, meditation. They are the answer to everything. »»»»

FAITH GROWS STRONGER WITH USE

Dr. Samuel M. Shoemaker

Most of us are smart enough to know that the possession of faith adds an important dimension to life. Especially when the going is rough, or calamity befalls, or we do not see the light ahead, it is very good to be able to fall back on something larger than ourselves for confidence and for wisdom....We know it is sensible enough to have faith in a doctor we have come to trust, or a lawyer, or a good financial adviser, but these are close enough to home to be subject to experimental verification. When we say 'faith', we usually mean faith in God, or an ultimate purpose, or a meaning in life. Are these starry-eyed assumptions, which tend to draw our minds away for a few bright moments from the dark, unwelcome facts to which in the end we must return? In short, does faith really add a new dimension of reality, or does it tend to obscure the reality which is there?

We must admit, on considerable evidence, that faith often casts a decisive and positive vote in human affairs. We have seen people get well from what looks like a fatal illness, for apparently no better reason than that they wanted to, and believed they would; and we have seen others die, not because they were beyond hope, but because they have given up hope. We have seen people maimed through a crippling illness that would down most of us, but they had a will to go on, a faith that life could still mean something; and they have picked up the pieces and made a heroic comeback from a misfortune. We have seen people find satisfaction and adventure in a life otherwise little, commonplace and drab, because they had this mysterious thing called faith.

Begin with the premise that there is no God, and there is only self to lean on, and life will furnish plenty of evidence that you are right. But begin with the premise of God with its corollary of faith, and life will pour into your lap equal amounts of evidence that the premise is true. It all seems to come back to the fundamental attitude we adopt toward life. On the basis of what it does, what it actually produces in life, surely the 'faiths' have it!...

One of the most incredibly courageous and creative lives lived in our time was that of the playwright, Edward Sheldon.

He was paralyzed for years, and later struck blind. But he kept living for other people, doing for them far more ingenious things than most well people ever do. In *The Man Who Lived Twice* (Charles Scribner's Sons), his biographer Eric Barnes says of him, "He had taken with him into his ordeal the absolute certainty that nothing happens without a reason. Throughout the long months of pain and bewilderment this idea hung in his thoughts, a faint but steadily glowing spark in the blackness. He had an unshakable belief that there must be some kind of design back of what had happened to him. The need to learn something of the design, if only a small part, strengthened his resolve to go on." For years he appeared to have none of the consolations of ordinary religious faith, though toward the close of his life these became clearer and more articulate to him. But surely the belief that "nothing happens without a reason" is in itself no mean faith! And it kept this man intensely interested in life and other people, ceaselessly occupied in helping them...

But how does one find this faith?

Faith is very contagious. We catch it, from people who have it. I have caught a lot of it from great spiritual leaders, and from obscure people who are just as radiant with it. It is not that these people are always so saintly, but that they are always so enthusiastic about God and life! They do not go down before the storms of life, and they are less elated than others about its temporary glories and successes. Some of them have grown quietly and steadily through the years, and some have come into a blazing kind of faith in striking ways. As one of the latter, read *The Late Liz*, by Elizabeth Burns. It is the most astonishing story of conversion I have ever read in modern literature. Here is a woman who had every worldly opportunity, an IQ said to be the equal of Einstein's, who became an alcoholic, a drug addict, three times divorced, without hope or meaning in her life, until she met a couple at a dinner party one night in New Canaan. There the process of transformation began. Such an experience is, I think, inexplicable without God.

Try faith for yourself. Don't try to gulp all the hard theological propositions you can think of at one swallow. Give as much of yourself as you can to as much of God as you understand. This is an experiment, not a declaration.

You do not need to begin by affirming anything but your own honest need, and the possibility of a God. Act as if He were there. That's what you do when you try a chemical experiment by assuming your hypothesis to be true. The outcome proves it true or false, and you keep it or discard it. Remember: God is not just a proposition, He is a Person. The laws that govern relationships govern religion also. We know another by exchange, by communion, by imparting something of ourselves. In real human love, we know the joy of surrendering ourselves joyfully to another. The more we let go with them, the more we know and enjoy and understand them. It is so with God. We must relax and let go... He comes to people who come to Him without trying to make bargains.

Then begin living in faith. And we must say that faith active, alive and growing, is prayer. Prayer is working along with God. It is not trying to get God to do what we want Him to do, it is trying to find out what He wants us to do...We do not always get what we ask for, but we get a fresh contact with God, and we must honestly say that everything goes better when we pray. Archbishop Temple is reported to have said, "When I pray, coincidences happen. When I stop praying, the coincidences stop." That such an alignment with the fundamental Force of the universe gives an increase of life, of zest, of meaning, of adventure, even of excitement, is the soberest statement of truth.

In a great book called *The Tragic Sense of Life*, the philosopher Unamuno....says that those who deny God deny Him because of their despair at not finding Him. Maybe they have not tried hard enough or have tried the wrong way. Maybe they have tried from the wrong motives...God wants to get to us much more than we want to get to Him. Drop the violent atheism or agnosticism for a while, and open yourself to Him through prayer, through reading the Bible, through company with another who believes in Him. A crack will begin to open, then widen, then the light of faith will begin flooding in.

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THE MIRACLE

Mark Halpern

Human nature is undoubtedly the most fascinating of all subjects for study and observation. For it is the battleground of all the conflicting forces that hold continual warfare within the human personality. The one salient truth to be learned about this contest of the opposing forces in human nature, is that the individual must wage his own battle for mastery and perfect serenity. None can enter into or take over the inner warfare of another soul.

Often has man been told in the past, even as he is being told in the present, that human nature never changes. Certainly, if one sees the life of mankind through a cynical and narrowed perspective, it would seem that the nature of the species as well as of the individual unit remains essentially the same.

And yet, changes in human nature do occur; as is shown by the lives of many noble and saintly characters, who at one time were far from being paragons of virtue. So potent is the power of man's indwelling divinity, that when the self-centered little personality is no more, the divine spark becomes a flame that consumes the fiends of the lower nature, until only selfless love remains.

* * *

The friendly rays of the late afternoon sun slanted in through the bedroom window. They fell gently in caressing warmth upon the bed on which lay the quiet form of an elderly man with a thin wasted face. His pallor heightened the many deeply etched lines that gave evidence of long years of bitter inner turmoil. His head was turned toward the window, which looked out upon a large well-kept garden of the neighboring cottage. But his eyes were closed. Were it not for the almost imperceptible rise and fall of his chest under the blanket, one might have thought that he was not alive.

But although he appeared to be in a coma, consciousness had not deserted him. The doctor, who was standing at the doorway, speaking in a hushed voice to the man's wife, did not realize he was being heard by the one on the bed, as he went on to say:

"Since you are brave enough to ask me for the truth, I can see no advantage in withholding it. There is nothing more that medical science can do for your husband. Only a

miracle can save him. For the present, the most we can do for him is leave, so that he can be as quiet as possible."

The man on the bed heard the suppressed sob of his wife. Then came the sound of soft footsteps as the two left the bedroom. He opened his eyes. They burned with a feverish light that heightened the pallor of his wasted features. Gazing through the window out into the cheerful sunshine of the garden, he saw a massive ruddy-faced man in overalls, smoking a pipe, and leisurely tending the colorful array of richly blooming flowers.

The man on the bed began to speak in a painful whisper as though to himself: "So, only a miracle can save me. And he out there—he whom I've always hated for his gushing optimism and perfect health—he'll go on living and puttering among his flowers. I hate him! I—I—".

The bedridden man caught himself, his feverish eyes filling with fright at the ghastly thought that had seared through his conscience. Large beads of cold sweat stood out on his forehead: "I can't die like this"—he wailed— "filled with this awful hate. It would be worse—yes, worse than hell itself. Why have I this hate within my breast, this relentless fiend that has been using me all my life for its own devilish end to fill the world with more hate? Always I've hated—those of other nations and religions—those more fortunate than I—yes, I have even hated my neighbor. Listening to the fiend hate, I turned my back on the Lord of Love, who said, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Oh, Son of Love, forgive me. Gentle Nazarene—take pity on me—let me not die hating. If it is Thy will, I am content to pass on. I am not afraid—only let me not leave this world with the poison of hate within me!"

The man's eyes filled with tears that welled up and then slid down his haggard face. "Help me," he sobbed.

Gradually, as he lay there gazing out the window at the man working in the garden, it seemed to him that he was seeing through an inner and more illuminating sight. The thick veil that had always blinded him with hate and prejudice, faded until it was gone. He could now see into the heart and soul of things. The flowers in the garden became alive with pulsating radiance of unearthly hues. The trees along the edge of the garden were no longer merely material growths. Each tree seemed to

be a living vibrant being, throbbing with spirit and creative joy.

But the greatest revelation of all was the new light in which his neighbor now appeared. It was a revelation that left the man on the bed looking on in reverent awe. For he saw no ruddy-faced man moving among the flowers in the garden, but a wondrously radiant being of light and beauty, with eyes of infinite love and compassion. The strangest thing of all about this revelation of his neighbor's real self, was the shadow of a heavy wooden cross that weighted down the back of that shining form. And the man on the bed knew, somehow, that it was the shadow of the cross of mortality, which every soul of the human family took upon himself in the earthly pilgrimage of experience.

Watching the radiant beauty of the figure moving about the garden, and taking in the full import of the overshadowing cross, the man on the bed released the tide of love surging up within his breast, and in a hushed whisper exclaimed: "How wonderful is my neighbor! I love him!"

With the magic of those last three words he felt a powerful flood of new life enter his being. And he knew, somehow, that all was well with him—that he was not the same man—that he had been dead, and now was alive. For the first time he clearly understood what the gentle Nazarene had meant in saying "Ye must be born again." Yes, he had been born again!

Now he was seeing with his true vision. His neighbor once more wore the mortal covering of flesh. But the man on the bed smiled to himself. He had seen the real self of his neighbor, and he realized at last that the real self of every human being is divine.

He closed his eyes like a child, and slept. It was his first untroubled sleep in many years.

The following morning, he heard the doctor declare in astonishment, after examining him, "I can't understand. There has been a remarkable change in your husband. He's on the road to recovery. A miracle has happened."

* * *

How like the sick man are we! How many times have you said, "I hate him or her or that." Do you realize these two words "I hate" are a boomerang that returns to the one who sent them forth; and that the power with which they return to us is so tremendous it creates illness of both mind and body. Their utterance

becomes a habit or a figure of speech, but if we only stopped to realize the discord we created by their use, we would never again allow those words to leave our lips. When they appear even in thought we should destroy them as quickly as we would a venemous serpent.

Replace hate with love and you will find regeneration is almost instantaneous.

For LOVE is the supreme healer, the great MIRACLE.

FRIENDSHIP

Vida Reed Stone

True friendship is warm and heart-satisfying, yet clear and cool as mountain snows; of time and space, yet unattached. There is joy in such relationships. Those who dwell in personal affection, which is ever binding, cannot understand the exhilaration of these mountain-heights of the spirit. Yet if the desire for understanding within others is sincere, one can walk with them until they cast off the shells of bondage and lift into the radiance of impersonal love.

How one rejoices when another comes to know his own true being. Then friendship may be expressed at a higher level and will reflect the eternal realities. More and more individuals will come to know this true friendship and experience its peace and serenity. Love is increased and not diminished in this way of freedom and understanding.

Those who dwell within the light of such friendships will seek each other when the spirit moves, and not as custom or obligation dictates. When all will have awakened to the realization and beauty of true friendship, man will experience the communion of saints, the joy of the sons of God set free, and the peace of oneness in spirit, mind and heart.

— *In her CREATIVE LIVING*

THE DISTURBING CHRIST

Deane W. Ferm

One of the passages in the New Testament which continues to haunt me is the one in which Jesus at Caesarea Phillipi says to his disciples: "Who do you say that I am?" Peter replies by saying: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

This passage haunts me, because I wonder what I would have said if I had been in Peter's place. Or, what would I say if Christ were to confront me today? I believe that my answer would be something like this:

Christ disturbs me! He disturbs me with his emphasis on the heart. If he had only denounced murder and adultery and stealing, that would have been easy. I am not likely to do any of these things. I am a law-abiding citizen. I thank God that I am not like some men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers. But Christ is not satisfied with this. He goes deeper. He probes into my heart—into my inner motivations:

"Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment."

"Judge not that you be not judged."

"Make clean the inside of the cup that the outside may be clean also."

This is disturbing! This is embarrassing! Why can't he leave my inner motives alone? Can I say that I have never judged anyone wrongly or condemned anyone falsely? Is it not disturbing to know that Christ judges my inner thoughts as well as my outward actions?

"You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, and your neighbor as yourself."

"Treat other people exactly as you would like to be treated by them—this is the essence of all true religion."

"The man who loves his neighbor has obeyed the whole law in regard to his neighbor."

This is asking too much of me! It is so easy to say that I love all my neighbors—all my fellow men. But how I can vacillate! Why does that person who has a different color of skin—why does he have to be my neighbor? Or, that person who has seen through some of my superficialities—he's a threat to my status. Or, that person who rubs me the wrong way—why do I have to be his keeper? It is disturbing when Christ insists that racial discrimination is wrong—that intolerance is bad—that social prestige is snobbery—that I

am my brother's keeper. Why can't he leave me alone? It is so much more convenient to be a Comfortable Christian.

And Christ disturbs me in stressing service to God and man as the highest calling. I don't like this. It doesn't pay off. Christ shows me what my true values are. And I know that although I often can fool my neighbors, I can never deceive Christ.

Yes, Christ disturbs me because he is too big for me. His character is too pure. The dimensions of his love are too great. His teachings are too encompassing. Oh, how I have distorted his religion. I worry about the number of sacraments and how they should be administered; the creeds and how they should be recited; the Bible and how it should be read; the order of service and how it should be arranged.

Yet I know in my own heart that when I begin to stress the husks and trappings of my religion, I am only trying to escape from that central claim that Christ has made upon me: to love and to serve my God and my fellow men. I know that I can never escape Christ. For, no matter where I go or what I do, he is there confronting me and disturbing me. And I know full well that if I am ever to be at peace with my own conscience, I shall continue to be disturbed by Christ... until I am released from bondage to myself and give my life to him.

WHEN WE PRAY

The lonely hour
At eventide
We need not dread;
Love's by our side.

The path was steep
Our Master trod;
He walked alone,
Alone with God.

Our God is near
And when we pray
He turns the tide,
In comes the day.

— Jessie L. Salls

HIDDEN BEAUTY

Beauty shines on every storm-tossed sea,
On starlit night, on desert sand.
Beauty glows on flowering bush and tree,
God's loveliness on all the land.

Beauty lives in each aspiring soul,
A radiance known as purity.
For holiness is God implanted there
To set the hidden splendor free.

— Mildred Long

JUDAS

Each dew drop is a glistening coin of light,
And tree limbs form a black and grotesque cross.
I look on him there in the shadowed night—
He kneels in prayer, is this my gain or loss?
The weight of silver here within my hand
Becomes the weight of lead within my heart.
By Him whose side as friend I used to stand
Is now so suddenly a world apart.
And once I knew the glory of His love,
And heard Him call me gently by my name.
Are you, O God, aware in heaven above?
And does He know of all my guilt and shame?
One simple gesture and no word to say.
A kiss...the son of God I will betray.

— Zelma S. Dennis

The Breath of Life

Nothing is stranger than the pumping force
That sends invisible substance in and out
Of precious blood-filled lungs, although of course
It's such a common thing to think about.

We take sweet air, it turns to flesh and bone,
Its coming and its going marks our days—
God breathes the Breath of Life into his own,
And blessed are the ones that know his ways.

The Breath of Life! Inhale it with a prayer
If you would feel God's presence everywhere.

— *Bess Foster Smith*

THE WHITE HOUR

To every soul, and soon or late,
There comes a pause in time,
When stands revealed in sudden flash
Life's one White Hour sublime;

An hour in which eternity
Pours balm on earthly cares—
Forgotten are the thoughts of self,
The soul looks up, and dares!

No more of lukewarm compromise
In giving all for all;
No trembling for security,
The soul has heard the Call—

The call to live in light of Truth,
Where mortal fears are gone;
To bring together man and man,
Unveil Love's golden dawn.

To laugh at danger, smile at death,
And glory at the odds;
To meet each challenge 'gainst the right,
Nor ask help of the gods.

To every soul, and soon or late,
There comes a pause in time,
When stands revealed in sudden flash
Life's one White Hour sublime.

— Mark Halpern

A PRAYER GROUP NEEDS A LEADER

Mildred Long

Not every one can lead a prayer group, though it seems a simple thing to do. Experience shows that many a prayer group falls apart because of lack of adequate leadership. Let us consider some of the qualifications of a leader.

First of all, the leader of a prayer group must have a deep spiritual experience. She must lead a life of prayer and devotion. (I use "she" because I am thinking of the small day-time groups of women who meet to pray.) Humility and dedication to a high purpose are essential. No one can lead others to a deeper realization unless she has seen the Light and glimpsed the widening horizon of greater understanding.

The leader must recognize the purpose of the prayer group and be able to keep this purpose central. This purpose seems to me to be two-fold: (1) to meet God and therefore to lead each soul to purification and a deeper spiritual understanding; and (2) to pray for others.

If the women who meet discuss their neighbors, or problems, or try to settle international issues, or fall into discussion of doctrine, or argue and disagree concerning spiritual concepts, the group can scarcely be called a prayer group. For a prayer group meets to pray: that is, to come face to face with God, to adore and worship, to surrender and listen, and to let God enter into each heart for cleansing, for healing, for inspiration, for quietness.

Therefore let the women come together in quietness. Let the first few minutes be spent in silence in which each one makes her contact with God. The leader may use a few quiet words here to aid in making God real and present. Let there be meditation on a Scripture or other material that centers the thought on God and makes the soul aware of His presence and its relation to Him. There is almost no limit to this type of meditation. But only a leader who does this in private will be equipped to lead the group and make real to the group the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

In some groups each one may take her turn in leading the meditation time. And many groups like to share in this way. But the leader must be alert to avoid falling into the pitfalls mentioned, or consuming too much time, for intercessory prayer should not

be neglected.

This prayer for others needs also to be under control. We want to pray for our families and friends, and especially for those who are sick or in trouble. But we should take as little time as possible to tell of the troubles and problems. God knows the problem much better than we do. God has the supply for every need. Let us just present the person and the need to God and ask that His perfect will be done. A simple prayer is all that is needed. It is both unnecessary and presumptuous to tell God all the lurid details or tell Him how to meet the need. "Prayer" groups have had to disband because they became gossip centers, because they told too much and did not hold the information in confidence. Such a group did not have a clear conception of the meaning of prayer. All praying for another must be done in love and for the glory of God, not to satisfy human desires. Prayer for others is serious business and a tremendous responsibility. Perhaps here more than elsewhere the need for strong leadership is evident.

There can be much freedom during this time of intercessory prayer. All can take part. Sometimes all pray in silence. Sometimes one voices the prayer. Individuals or causes can be prayed for separately or in groups. The important thing is that each one keeps her own consciousness as in the presence of God, filled with His peace and light.

At the close of the hour (and this time should be strictly observed) the leader may effectively close with a meditative thought. Sometimes we suggest that this group is united with all other praying groups everywhere, thus lifting the world to God—

"For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

There should be a definite closing prayer or benediction, or verse of Scripture repeated in unison. It is good to rise and join hands in a circle for this benediction. This prevents the group from falling into ordinary conversation and so dissipating the power. If the presence of the Holy Spirit has really been felt, often the group will leave quietly without conversation.

The leader must love the hour of prayer, love the members of the group, love to meditate. Most of all she must live a life of loving devotion to Him to whom we pray. »»»»

THE WAY OF THE CHRIST

Bess Foster Smith

Many great teachers in the course of history have led humanity toward a better way of life on earth, and we who inherit their teachings do well to reflect, occasionally, upon our rich heritage. From none of these have we received more blessings than from the lowly Nazarene, known throughout Christendom as *The Christ*.

As a child he must have been very precocious in all things psychic, confounding the doctors and sages with his questions when he was but twelve years old. He was probably asking them about the Brahmans, the Buddhists, the Zoroastrians and about Osiris and the Egyptian cults. He had, no doubt, studied the Tetrarch of the Jews. There was so much to learn.

It is held by many scholars that Jesus studied all of these forms of philosophy and perhaps visited in far countries where the Wise Men were glad to share their knowledge with this earnest Hebrew youth. He could very well have walked and talked with these Masters during his years of preparation for his ministry, as so much of our ancient lore says he did.

I am not one to believe that truth and light came to him entirely through illumination without seeking for it through study and self-discipline. It seems to me he must have put forth a real effort to master life's problems. He was human and learned, even as you and I, by applying himself diligently to his "Father's business."

His Father's business, which we have inherited, and which is now our business, was to learn the meaning of life and transmit that meaning in a clear way that mankind could follow—to develop within himself his God-like spirit, his Immortal Soul.

By studying and seeking for truth in all the ways available, he discovered the kernel of it all; unwrapping from it the husks of dogma and ritual that had encrusted it through the ages, he felt it growing within him like a grain of mustard seed. It grew into a revelation.

With a great love in his heart, his chief desire was to lift the burden of the meek, the lowly, the sick, the sorrowing. To all of these he sought to disclose the perfect and simplified plan of God that would be practicable for all. He said he did not come to

change the law but to fulfill it. He spoke with simple words and parables so that his way could be understood and followed by the most humble.

Thus, everyday words and thoughts and actions became important.

He called the sustaining power of God "Our Daily Bread," and the cleansing power of God "The Breath of Life," and the purity and peace of God he compared to "the Water which springeth up to Everlasting Life."

He used these and many more common phrases not only so they (and we) would understand spiritual things better but to make them (and us) more aware of the daily blessings that sustain life.

He took the sacred, hidden wisdom which he found in all the prevailing philosophies, and which had been selfishly preserved by priests and lamas and mystics, and by learned men of every tribe and nation since the beginning of time, and gave it out freely to everyone. The priests and Pharisees had limited themselves, and their power to do the will of God, by hoarding their knowledge of spiritual things. Christ proved that it was not necessary to meditate all day or to say long prayers to gain the good and perfect life.

He gave a workable solution to attain the Kingdom of God. He showed men the straight way for achieving perfection (reaching heaven) which, according to many other philosophies, was a long, winding and irrevocable karma.

Jesus became so sure of his oneness with God that he gave his life for his convictions. And strange as it seems, even some of us, with perhaps distorted conceptions of his meaning, do find more and more of these blessings growing within us when we try to live by his words.

As A Man Thinketh...

Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny.

— *Proverbial*

THE STRANGER WITHIN OUR GATES

A false concept of finite mind

To those who accept as truth the oneness of all life, there are no strangers within our gates, for they look upon all men as brothers, regardless of nationality, color, creed or station in life and they believe in the Fatherhood and Motherhood of God and in the Sonship and Brotherhood of man.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Upon these two Commandments all true religion is established. Through disobedience to these laws, man lives in a world of separateness and in that world he looks upon those who come to our shores from lands across the seas as foreigners and as strangers within our gates. Through obedience to these laws, man dwells in the World of Oneness—the World of Reality.

Brotherhood is man's natural, fundamental and highest estate and until Brotherhood is re-established upon this earth, through man's reunion with God, the promised "Peace on earth, good-will toward men," will continue to be just an unrealized dream, an unfulfilled hope.

Love is the only power that can dissolve the barriers which separate nation from nation and man from man—barriers which are a false concept of finite mind, caused by man's wandering away from God—and bring all the peoples of the earth together into that blissful estate of glorified *Oneness*, where man realizes his oneness with God and with all life.

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; ye cannot serve God and mammon." Whatever man experiences in life is the result of this choice.

— *Harry Halsey Starrett*

THE POWER OF THE WORD...

Dr. Albert Schweitzer...was in search for an absolute ethic which, if fully grasped and faithfully applied, would give to humanity a concept, a truth, a power by which it could greatly accelerate the development of its higher nature. That which he sought, he tells us, he found in a moment of inner illumination. The answer came in the simple words, *Reverence for Life.*

This phrase, with all that it implies, ethically, philosophically and spiritually, is Schweitzer's supreme gift to mankind. World figure that he is, the concept coined in those simple words, *Reverence for Life,* has found wide currency for its spiritual content and embodied idealism. A certain magic power attaches itself to such simple utterances of basic truths that they inevitably come to exercise a transforming influence on all who hear and heed them. From the few, this influence spreads to the many until it filters consciously and unconsciously into the mass mind. From impressions so received from above, the evolutionary forces are at work in gradually uplifting the collective body of humanity.

— *Theodore Heline*

ONE WORLD DIVINE

If mortal sweep of day,
If oxen, sheep and bird,
Grain of corn and hill
Are everlasting yea,
Created from the Word
Of Great Almighty Will;
Then dream
Of man
In any nation
Is theme
And plan
Of God's Creation.

— Carla Patsuris

Books

Selections from Raynor C. Johnson's WATCHER ON THE HILLS:

(Dr. Johnson's remarkable book, recording and interpreting the mystical experiences of ordinary people of our time, was reviewed in the August issue.)

"We do not live in an age of faith. When modern man thinks about the ultimate questions he is not disposed to accept ancient beliefs, he is not impressed by dogmatic assertion, and he is not able or prepared to respond to sweeping demands for 'faith'. To those who offer him views about the world, about human life and destiny, he asks, "What is your evidence?" One reason why I have written this book is to show how absurd it is to suppose that the only evidence to be weighed is that which our five senses provide...

"I have already indicated that I shall make little or no reference to the great classical mystics, since they have been the subject of many books...In the present book my judgments are based largely upon the experiences of ordinary people living in our midst and, because of this, they have for my purpose greater value. I have for some time been collecting and studying these accounts. When they are sifted carefully... we seem to have evidence of Reality breaking through the screen of appearances: surely an occurrence of the deepest interest to every seeker after truth in every field. Where it happens, it brings with it an ecstasy of Joy, an unconditioned Certainty, and the knowledge that what IS is better than our highest hopes and most far-flung desires...

"Scientists have assumed that religious truth was unverifiable—necessarily a matter of faith, and therefore quite possibly illusory.... Their suspicions have tended to be strengthened rather than dispelled when the defence of religion has been made in tones of authority rather than through the testimony of the mystic. For one might call the mystic the scientist of ultimate things; he is himself both the observer and the instrument. It is he who has verified in his experience that the *basic* data of religion are trustworthy: that God *is*, that He is infinitely beyond us and yet infinitely near, that He is Love and Beauty, Wisdom and Goodness—Perfection's own unutterable Self. All the great mystics have verified these things for themselves."

TESTIMONIES:

(1) "I remember now (and I am always recalling it) the greatest experience in my life, that vital moment when I was baptised by the Holy Spirit within. For one perfect second, unexpected, unheralded, and while I was doing a trivial task, my personal mind and body were fused in Light: a breathless unbearable Light-Perfection, as intense an the explosion of a flash of lightning within me...In this timeless second I knew a Love, Knowledge and Ecstasy transcending anything I could understand or describe. I was lifted into the midst of God, in whom all people, all worlds, and every created life or thing moved and had their being. Perfection! Had I been suffering from the worst mental or physical disease known to man, in that Light I should instantly have been made Whole.

"In that moment I knew my Lord dwells within my own being, and within everyone else. In that one moment I knew the truth of His eternal reality, and that He is ALL, that my Father and I are One, that all people and the Father are One, and that we are all One with each other in spirit."

(2) "I was standing among pine trees looking out at the sky when suddenly the heavens opened, as it were, and caught me up. I was swept up and out of myself altogether into a flood of White Glory. I had no sense of time or place. The ecstasy was terrific while it lasted. It could have lasted only a minute or two. It went as suddenly as it came. I found myself bathed with tears, but they were tears of joy. I felt One with everything and everybody; and somehow I knew that what I had experienced was Reality and that Reality is Perfection.

"I would like to add that no words seem to me able to convey a thousandth part of the depth and reality of that experience...Immediately after, I jotted down the following rough verses...

"What I chiefly remember is the Light and the ecstasy of Perfection being Real. But what the verses chiefly connote is the sense of One-ness; at the time, it was this which had chiefly impressed me."

(3) "I prayed for help from out of the darkness, and there, behold, as a flash, the scene changed. All became alive, the trees, the houses, the very stones became animated with life, and all became vibrant with the life within them. All breathed effulgent light, vivid sparkling light, radiating out and in every direction; and not only that, but everything seemed to be connected with everything else. Although all separate forms, and all vibrating with their own intensity of life, yet they all seemed to be connected by their vibrations into one whole thing...

"So in the same way with natural objects—by which I mean every common and ordinary thing of which we are conscious, including our bodies—they are but parts of one intensive radiant activity, every particle endowed with life and light of a quality that cannot be conceived of...And we are surrounded by this glorious world of light all the time!"

Book Review

THE CASE FOR REINCARNATION, by Leslie D. Weatherhead; 1960, 19 pp; 25¢
YOU WILL COME BACK, by F. E. Goold, 531 Bay Street, Ottawa 4, Ontario; 1958, 48 pp; 25¢. (Both booklets distributed by Mr. Goold.)

Whether the doctrine of reincarnation is a truth is for each person, after due reflection, to decide for himself; but certainly it is an integral part of the teachings of several of the great religious movements of the Orient, Buddhism and Hinduism especially, and clearly merits our attention from time to time in FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. Two fascinating booklets arrived in our office recently on this subject, written by Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead and by Mr. F. E. Goold. Both are extremely interesting and well-formulated but perhaps Dr. Weatherhead's is more significant by virtue of his established position in the Christian ministry today.

"The question I wish to discuss is whether we have lived before in some other bodily form and whether we may do so again after death." Thus Dr. Weatherhead begins a talk he delivered three years ago in London; this talk of 7,500 words has been reprinted in his booklet, *The Case For Reincarnation*. When a minister of Dr. Weatherhead's reputation commits himself, in a very forceful and documented address, to the twin doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, one finds it difficult to regard the subject any longer as unworthy of serious attention. We urge our readers to write to Mr. Goold in Ottawa for this booklet, as well as the longer booklet he himself has written, *You Will Come Back*.

Mr. Goold's work consists of a conversation between a teacher and student and enters into the subjects of karma and reincarnation at greater depth than the scope of Dr. Weatherhead's address permitted. It also contains a list of books that may interest those readers who wish to go further into the subject.

These two booklets present their common theme in an illuminating manner and together provide a basic handbook for people only slightly acquainted with their subject matter. If anyone prejudges Reincarnation on the grounds that it is not mentioned in the Bible, has no background in the Christian tradition, and is not supported by any great Western thinker, he will find much here to change his mind on all these counts.

— *P.H.*

From Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead's ***THE CASE FOR REINCARNATION***

"Plato believed wholeheartedly in reincarnation, and his famous 'Theory of Reminiscence' asserted that 'knowledge easily acquired is that which the enduring self had in an earlier life, so that it flows back easily'...

"The Christian affirms that God is just, that ultimately life is just, that justice is what we call an 'eternal value'. It will be vindicated at last...Now if we take this life as we often see it, how terribly unfair and unjust it seems. I have known people who, humanly speaking, have never had a chance, born with defects that appear to mar their lives, or else meeting with a whole series of misfortunes that shut them off from the happiness others know...

"Is human distress just luck, then? If so, how unjust is life! Is it God's will? Then how unlike any human father He must be...But if we accept the idea that all these inequalities are the result—in a cosmos of cause and effect—of earlier causes, the product of some distant past, the fruit of earlier choices, then our sense of justice is preserved...

"Let us suppose that a very depraved or entirely materialistic person dies. Let us suppose that from a religious point of view he has entirely misused his earth-life. Will his translation to a spiritual plane do all that needs doing? Will it not be like putting a person who has never given himself any chance to understand music into an everlasting concert, or a person who has never learned how to appreciate art into an art gallery from which he cannot escape? Can a man who has entirely neglected spiritual things be happy in a spiritual environment? If you say, 'Oh well, he can learn in the next phase'-is there nothing lost by misuse of the earth-life? Doesn't such a speculation make the earth-life meaningless?

"Let me take a crude example. Suppose a man lives only for sex...Can he, having failed to master physical desire, pass on to a higher life of the spirit?...It would be as incongruous and unsound as telling a medical student, who failed his qualifying examination, not to bother, but to go on treating people as if he had qualified. If I fail to pass those examinations which can only be taken while I dwell in a physical body, shall I not have to come back and take them again?..." «« »

NOTICES and COMMENTS

OUR COVER DESIGN. In answer to inquiries about the Folded Hands design that appears on our cover, we quote the text that Carl A. Evans used some years ago in response to similar inquiries made of him: "When Albrecht Durer (from whose *Folded Hands* the cover design was adapted) was a poor struggling artist, a friend who also aspired to be an artist made an agreement with him to do manual labor to earn the living for both while Durer studied and painted. Later it was planned that this friend should have his turn to paint. But when success came to Durer, his friend's hands had become so twisted and stiff that he could no longer paint. One day, seeing his friend's work-worn hands raised in prayer, Durer thought, 'I can never give back the lost skill of those hands, but I can express my feeling of love and gratitude by painting his hands as they are now, folded in prayer, to show my appreciation of a noble and unselfish character.'"

REPORT ON WORLD PRAYER. In the last issue we spoke about the World-wide Divine Love Radiation Service sponsored by Dr. C. H. Yeang of 24 Cantonment Rd., Penang, Malaya. Dr. Yeang tells us that as of October 15 he will have mailed to all parts of the world 100,000 of his leaflets describing his inspiring program, and that the response to his World Prayer effort has surpassed all his hopes. We have been able to distribute 3,000 leaflets and have ordered a similar number for distribution with the Anniversary Issue in December. Dr. Yeang's crusade has also met with a very appreciative response among our own readers, a number of whom have requested sizeable amounts of these leaflets for individual distribution. We hope others will follow their example!

COMMENT ON AUGUST ISSUE. Many letters have come in praising the August issue. The consensus seems to be that this is the outstanding number we have so far published. This is most encouraging, and heartens all of us. We want to thank everyone who took the time and thought to write. Your letters are very important to us and inspire us with renewed dedication to keep improving FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER all the time.

CONTRIBUTORS. Mrs. Jessie L. Salls, of Nyack, N. Y., makes

her debut in our pages this month with her touching lyric, 'When We Pray,' appearing on page 13...One of the highlights of the August issue was Deane W. Ferm's 'The Road Ahead in Religion' which, readers will recall, originally appeared in the CHRISTIAN CENTURY. In this issue we are happy to present Mr. Ferm writing directly for us for the first time. Mr. Ferm is Dean of the College Chapel at Mt. Holyoke College in So. Hadley, Mass. His 'The Disturbing Christ', on page 12, in a short space says many things, and very forcefully, that have badly needed to be said. One must admire Mr. Ferm's honesty and humility in writing this article...Vida Reed Stone, of Hollywood, Calif., an author and lecturer of wide experience, has recently become acquainted with our work and in the last few months has helped us considerably in her own state. We are happy to welcome her to our pages for the first time, with her fine piece on 'Friendship' on page 11... On page 5 we have reprinted significant extracts from an article written by Dr. Samuel M. Shoemaker in the April issue of WOMAN'S DAY magazine. Dr. Shoemaker, nationally known as a clergyman, is pastor of the Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh. We are grateful to him (as well as to the editors of WOMAN'S DAY) for granting permission to reprint portions of his article.

NEW CONTRIBUTING EDITOR. In the last four issues we have been privileged to present the spiritually inspired writings of Miss Mildred Long of Pomona, California. Miss Long became acquainted with us in 1952 but only recently has her name become more familiar to our regular readers. She has had a long experience as a school teacher in California and for the last ten years has devoted most of her time to prayer groups, writing and counseling. We are delighted to report that Miss Long has enthusiastically consented to become one of our Contributing Editors and we trust that her inspiring articles will continue to appear in FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER for a long time to come.

FIP LIBRARY. Readers in the Greater New York area are invited to call at our office and avail themselves of our growing library of religious publications from all corners of the world.

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When Faith Replaces Fear

The house where death has closed the casement shutters
Will once again re-open to the day;
The oriole that captured, beats and flutters,
A moment later soars and flies away.
The blackest night will always turn to morning,
And silently grim darkness disappear;
So courage and contentment will be dawning
When faith replaces strife and useless fear.

How vain it is to spend the hours in grieving!
Like frail, bewildered moths above a flame,
In unexpected haste we may be leaving
This fragile temple christened with our name.
The flight toward God is cradled in man's breast;
The star of faith will lead us on our quest.

— *Josepha Murray Emms*

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